

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
VETERANS' RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 19.84, Wis. Stats., a regular meeting of the **Brown County Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee** was held on Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 201 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

PRESENT: Chair Bernie Erickson, Duane Pierce, Ed Koslowski, Tracy Rosinski, Jerry Polus, Linda Pera, Carl Soderberg

EXCUSED: Joe Witkowski, Jim Haskins, Delores Pierce, Louise Dahlke

****Running Total of Veterans' Certificates: 1730**

1. Call Meeting to Order.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernie Erickson at 4:30 pm.

2. Invocation.

There was no invocation at this meeting as Jim Haskins was excused.

3. Approve/Modify Agenda.

Motion made by Duane Pierce, seconded by Tracy Rosinski to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Approve/Modify Minutes of June 21, 2016.

Motion made by Ed Koslowski, seconded by Duane Pierce to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Update re: Honor Rewards Program.

Linda Pera from the Register of Deeds Office reported on the Honor Rewards Program for Cathy Williquette. She provided the Subcommittee with a list of participating business, a copy of which is attached. Pera informed 111 veterans have applied for an Honor Rewards card but three were not approved because they were not residents of Brown County. She continued that Debbie Van Pay of the Register of Deeds set up a table at the recent Pearly Gates ride to provide information on the program and 18 veterans signed up. There was also a lot of positive feedback from veterans who did not reside in Brown County but wanted information on how to start an Honors Reward program in their counties. Pera also said that Carrie Wengerter of the Register of Deeds office has volunteered to be at the Fair from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm to sign both veterans and businesses up for the program. Polus would like to be sure that the list of participating businesses which was used at the press release is on display at the Fair. Polus would like the Honor Rewards table to be next to the table where veterans can sign up for the Brown County certificates. Erickson noted that he had spoken with Supervisor Richard Schadewald and Schadewald indicated that he would be available to help with the certificates at the Fair.

6. Possible Discussion re: 2016 Veterans' Appreciation Day at the Brown County Fair.

a) 25th Anniversary of Desert Storm.

Polus reported that he had sent out posters to all of the area veteran organizations during the last week of June. Tickets will be available soon. A discussion was held regarding scanning tickets or allowing the various organizations to print their tickets in their newsletters so veterans could cut them out and use them at the Fair but

it was decided that that could create some problems. It was noted, however, that it would be suggested to the Fair to let veterans who do not have a ticket in with proper identification. Polus noted that tickets are available at four locations and veterans should be able to make it to one of those locations to get tickets if they want them.

b) Fair Agenda.

Polus distributed an updated agenda and the Subcommittee ran through it to see if any modifications were needed. A copy of the agenda is attached hereto. The only thing that is not confirmed is the chaplain's prayer but several options were discussed and this should not be a problem. Polus noted that he gave careful consideration to a guest speaker and has asked Scott Katka who is the supervisor at the Vet Center as well as a desert vet. A discussion was also held with regard to getting a small gift for Laura Nehlson for singing the National Anthem and Erickson will take care of this. The remainder of the agenda was appropriate and approved by the Subcommittee. Erickson informed that he has ordered the dog tags and will also be sure the certificates are printed. It was indicated that Heartland will pay for the stage and Human will cover the cost of the band.

7. Report from CVSO Jerry Polus.

Polus reported that Tom Doyle in his office has applied for two vacant CVSO positions; one in Oconto County and one in Marinette County. Polus said that although he is at risk for losing a great employee, he understood Doyle's position and would wish him well and be sorry to see him go. Polus also said that his office has been quite busy lately and is moving into the annual budget process. He said to date donations have amounted to \$5,400 and things are in good shape from a financial standpoint.

8. Comments from Carl Soderberg.

Carl Soderberg said that he recently heard about the first case of a veteran who had the co pay for the emergency care expenses. It is his understanding that the court case on this has been appealed and essentially granted, but there are no regulars for process or procedures. The process will be decided by the Veterans Board of Appeal, not the Veterans Administration in Washington. This is an issue that is still being resolved. He recalled the Court ruled that the VA had misinterpreted a section of a law and that the VA should pay for veterans' co pays if there is an emergency medical situation. The co pay that the veterans insurance does not cover, the VA said the veteran is responsible for. The Court case said the language of the law said the exact opposite and right after that happened there were a number of appeals filed of previous denials. The first one has now worked through the system and it is more or less approved, but they are still waiting for the procedure on how to deal with it.

Soderberg also said that his office is trying to get a feel of how many flags will be needed around Veterans Day. They want to have enough flags but they do not want to have a surplus. If anyone knows of a post that needs flags, they can let Soderberg know.

9. Report from Committee Members Present (Erickson, Dahlke, Haskins, Koslowski, Pierce, Rosinski & Witkowski).

-Erickson informed that he recently talked with Rosemary Desisles and she asked him to say "hi" to the Subcommittee. She also indicated that she may be willing to come back on occasion to help out if the Subcommittee needed her.

-Koslowski would like to see Veterans Day activities added to the agenda soon so that the Subcommittee can start to figure out how the day will be observed since Rosemary Desisles is no longer with the Subcommittee. Koslowski also asked about getting some new members on the Subcommittee. Erickson responded that he will check with County Supervisor Richard Schadewald to see if he is interested in joining the group.

Koslowski continued that he had recently received a call from the Veterans' Manor who is looking for a large American flag as well as POW flag and a Wisconsin flag. This was discussed a little bit and Erickson suggested that the manor contact Senator Dave Hansen about this.

Koslowski also said that one of his co-workers who is with the National Guard recently did his annual training. He is with the engineering unit out of Prairie Du Chien and the unit was off site working on a project. Over \$300 was taken out of the check for MREs. Some of the meals were catered in, and the rest of the time they were eating

MREs. Koslowski has never heard of anyone on active duty being charged for meals and Soderberg said that he will look into this a little bit.

-Pierce reported that the annual POW ceremony will be held on September 16 at 7:00 pm at the POW flagpole outside of the Brown County Courthouse. Pierce noted that last year over 100 people attended and he is hoping for a good turn out again this year. Pierce also talked about the Pearly Gates ride held recently. He said that the proceeds are split between Vietnam Vets 224 and Desert Vets. The organizations use the proceeds for things like gift cards at Memorial Day, Christmas baskets, the Gold Star organization, donations to the Community Shelter to help veterans and scholarships. Pierce said that there were over 2400 participants at the ride plus a lot more for the party afterward. There were 105 businesses that sponsored the ride which was a record. Pierce will not know the actual end numbers but said that last year they made over \$75,000. This year they honored POWs and there was also a group of WW II vets who were honored. Pictures of the event can be seen on Pearly Gate's FB page.

Pierce also noted that he had been at a concert recently at the Meyer Theater for a concert by JP Lane and Lee Greenwood. It was a fundraising event for a new veterans group in Madison and Pierce that the event was emotionally amazing. JP and Greenwood got to know each other through a veteran's organization that builds homes for veterans and JP was asked to do a concert and he offered to bring Lee Greenwood. The Madison group is trying to prevent veteran's suicide by use of gun skins. A gun skin can be customized and then put on the gun with the through being that in that moment a veteran picks up a gun to end his life, but sees a picture that has some meaning, can prevent it.

-Rosinski said that the Yellow Ribbon Honor Flight leaving from EAA at the end of July will include one of Heartland's hospice patients. Pierce added that all Honor Flights are now accepting Vietnam Veterans. Rosinski also said that the book, The Frozen Chosen, was recently released and she would be happy to loan it out after she gets done reading it.

-Soderberg informed the group about a few events coming up. The annual Mohican Pow Wow will be held in Bowler the week of August 12 – 14. Additionally, the American Legion in Appleton will be having a corn roast fundraiser on August 17. Finally, Soderberg said that the Oconto County Fair will open on August 18 and he noted that they always have a veteran's ceremony on opening day.

10. **Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law. None.**

11. **Adjourn.**

Motion made by Duane Pierce, seconded by Tracy Rosinski to adjourn at 5:34 pm. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio
Recording Secretary